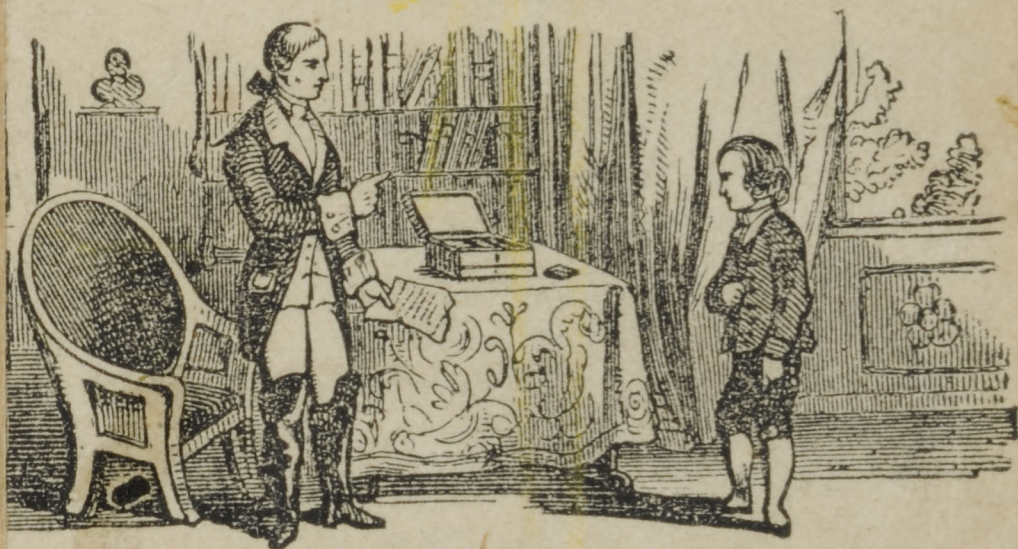


CARL THORN'S

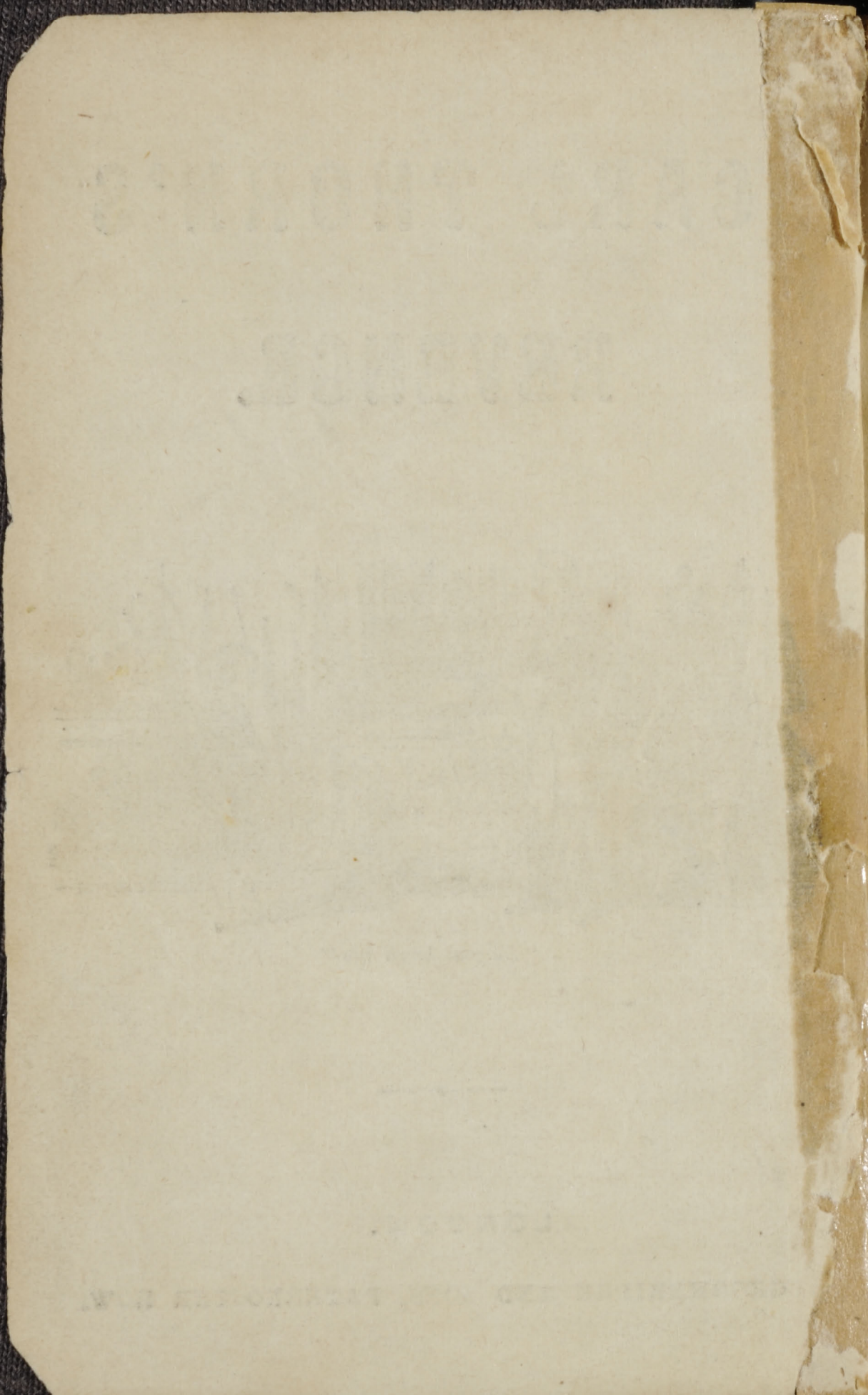
REVENGE.



"Do you know me?"

LONDON.

GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW.



Carl Thorn's Revenge.

CHAPTER I.

A PRUSSIAN VILLAGE, AND SOME OF ITS INHABITANTS.

IT was very wrong, but so it was, that Michael Arnold *would* delight in tormenting and terrifying Carl Thorn. Towards all other children in the village of Sprea, Michael was pleasant and good-humoured enough ; but the moment poor Carl appeared, that moment did a roguish expression come over Michael's face, while he prepared for what he called—or what he would have called, had he been an English boy of our own days—a *prime bit of fun*, or a *lark*, or some other term, often used by vulgar lads, when they speak of something particularly mischievous.

It was cowardly, very cowardly, of Michael ; for while he himself was a strong robust boy, twelve years of age, or thereabout, Carl was two or three years younger, and as delicate as a boy not actually in ill health could well be. It was the more cowardly too, because Carl seemed to have no one to take his part : his only friend was his mother, a widow lady

who, since she had lived in Sprea, had seldom been seen beyond her own cottage garden, and whose health seemed to have been much broken down by sorrow and suffering.

It was ungenerous as well as cowardly ; for Carl and his mother were strangers in Sprea ; and, for that reason, should have been treated with respect and kindness.

Michael, however, never stopped to consider : he knew it was some pleasure to frighten the little helpless child, and that pleasure he determined to enjoy. But before we say any more about Michael and Carl, we must make known more particularly where they lived.

Sprea is a village near the town of Custrin, in Prussia. It is a very small and poor place, but its situation is delightful. The few houses it contains are scattered irregularly about the slopes of a gently rising ground, at the bottom of which runs a clear pleasant stream, that, after struggling hither and thither in many a serpent-like bend, at last empties itself in the river Wartha.

A hundred years ago, or a little less, about which time our story commences, there were but three habitations in the whole village, which had any appearance of comfort. The first of these was the old chateau, or country-house, of Count Stettin, to whom the whole village and the country for miles round belonged. It was said that the ancestors of this Count were, in their days, little better than mighty robbers, and that the old chateau had witnessed many shocking scenes of cruelty. But these times had passed away, and the

Count who lived in the year 1755, was scarcely known in Sprea, while the neglected chateau was fast going to decay.

The house next in importance, was an old, huge-roofed, gable-fronted, rambling place, shut in from the rest of the village by high walls, except on the side where rolled the source of its occupier's prosperity—the little river. Overhanging this, was a mill, with its large water-wheel, kept always in motion by a natural fall of the stream. Here lived John Arnold the miller, and Michael was his son.

As to the miller himself, he was rather good-tempered than otherwise, except that he had certain strong prejudices and antipathies, which too often wonderfully moved him. For instance, it was his firm opinion, which nothing could alter or shake, that money was not only the best of all good things in the world, but that the possession of it was the only sure proof of merit. Now, as John Arnold was, without dispute, the richest personage in Sprea, it followed quite naturally, that John Arnold thought himself the most important, and best man in the village. There were few to gainsay this; and it is but just to say, that to his poor neighbours, who withheld from him none of the homage he claimed, he was kind and considerate, though fond of showing much petty authority.

Among John Arnold's antipathies or dislikes, one was strongly fixed upon the stranger widow, who lived in the only other decent dwelling in Sprea. This was a neat little cottage on the opposite side of the stream,

but otherwise very near to the mill. Why the miller suffered himself to dislike this harmless neighbour, perhaps he himself could not have explained. He considered her, however, to be an interloper, and he did not see why the village of Sprea should be burdened with people who refused to make any acquaintance, and who, above all things, would give no account of themselves to him, the rich and all-important John Arnold.

It was, moreover, the general opinion, that the widow Thorn was poor. When, therefore, the miller was informed by those who had had occasion to call upon her, that her cottage was elegantly furnished, and that she looked and spoke like a person of consequence, he was quite indignant. If he could have done it, he would have banished the poor lady from her lonely retreat; and as he could not do that, he scowled every day, and ten times a-day, across the stream, at the pretty white-washed cottage, as though he really had received from its inmate some unpardonable injury.

Prejudices and bad feeling spread very rapidly in some families, and thus Michael Arnold had been led to fancy himself called upon to hate and torment poor little Carl. It was unfortunate that he had no gentle and kind-hearted mother to teach him better. John Arnold's wife had long been dead.

CHAPTER II.

THE TROUBLES OF CARL THORN.

POOR little Carl had known some changes in his short life. Until he was about three years of age, he had been nursed in luxury. His father was a trusted servant of the King of Prussia, and lived in a large house in the gayest part of the fine city of Berlin. Suddenly he was charged with being unfaithful to his master, by revealing some great secret, and, without much inquiry, was dismissed in disgrace. Thus plunged from honour and riches to scorn and poverty, Carl could very well remember the removal of his parents from their beautiful house, to a small lodging in quite a different part of Berlin, and the dismissal of all their servants, except Agatha, his own nurse. After this, Carl had noticed the altered looks of his father,—how thin and pale he became, and how fast the gray hairs increased. He had seen, too, how sorrowful his mother appeared, except when his father was by, and then how she strove to hide her own troubles, that she might not add to his distress. He had witnessed how she performed with her own hands, almost every thing which had before been done by servants. And though Carl was too young to understand very much of what had taken place, he heard enough from Agatha, to fill his mind with strange, mysterious thoughts.

Among other things, he earnestly wished that he were a man, that he might go and tell King Frederick how badly he had used his father, who was too good and true to have been guilty of any such fault as had been laid to his charge.

Then another change had taken place. When Carl was scarcely five years old, his father died of grief, so his mother told him; and the little boy had since then often wondered how *grief* could kill any one. So it was, however, with his father, for his mother had said it; and as Carl believed that King Frederick was the cause of his father's grief, he quite made up his mind that the king was a very bad man.

His father's melancholy death had led to another removal. How the widow Thorn came to think of living in the village of Sprea, we are not told; but it was to Sprea that she determined to take her little Carl. It may be that she thought he needed country air, and that she herself wished to go where no one knew of her misfortunes and sorrows.

It was a great trial to poor Carl at this time to part with Agatha; but his mother told them both that it must be; for all the property she had left was scarcely enough to provide for herself and her child. So Agatha had been obliged, with many tears, to seek another service.

At Sprea, then, Carl and his mother had lived about four years; and if it had not been for two troubles, his life would have been a pleasant one; for he loved the pure air and

the beautiful meadows, and gentle stream, and cared very little for any other companion while he had his own mother to talk to within doors, and the birds of the air to listen to without: above all living things in the world, except his mother and Agatha, Carl loved birds. But there were two circumstances, as we have just said, which often made Carl sad. The first was, that his mother was often unhappy. She did not, indeed, shed many tears when he was near, nor make great lamentations at any time; but Carl was a thoughtful boy, and he fancied he could tell what was passing in his mother's mind, when, perhaps, she supposed he was thinking of something very different, and even when she was trying to amuse him with stories of her childhood. Carl feared, too, that his mother missed the many luxuries she had, as he well knew, been used to; and though he really could enjoy the very homely and coarse food they were obliged to use, he did wish, for his mother's sake, that some kind fairy,—Carl had heard of fairies,—would bring every day to their cottage such nice things as he remembered to have seen and tasted, when he was but a little child.

The other great disturber of Carl's comfort, was Michael Arnold. No one but himself knew how much he suffered from the miller's mischievous son. Least of all did his mother know it. She little guessed that her "errand boy," as she often playfully called Carl, could never pass the great gate of the mill-yard without trembling lest his tormentor should

be in sight; and how many insults he had borne in silence, because he would not add to his dear mother's distress.

Once within the cottage walls, and when he could quite forget these vexations, then was Carl happy. You must not think he was idle:—far from it! Perhaps his was the busiest head in all Sprea, to say nothing of his hands, which were generally full of work. Only to think how much a boy of nine or ten years old can do to help a poor lonely mother is quite surprising; and scarcely anything can be thought of, that Carl was not ready to perform. But Carl did all such things as a matter of course, because he loved his mother: his head-work he loved for its own sake.

It was a good thing for Carl that his mother had thought of bringing to Sprea a large case full of books, which had belonged to his father or herself, when they were in prosperity; and it was a happy thing both for Carl and his mother, that she was as able and willing to teach him, as he was to learn. Oh! the glorious long evenings that the widow Thorn and her son passed alone, shut out from the rest of the world, reading and talking about a thousand pleasant and useful things; so that, after a time, and a short time too, Carl's head was quite a museum of entertaining knowledge! And what was better still,—how many kind and wise instructions did he receive from that gentle mother, how many lessons of contentment, industry, perseverance, and kindness to all!—of gratitude to his Maker,—so that his heart was filled with love, while his head

was filled with knowledge. At such times as these, Carl was quite sure that he could forgive and forget all Michael Arnold's unkindness, and wished that Michael could but know how friendly towards him he felt. He tried, too, to forgive King Frederick; but this was a harder task.

One fine morning in early spring, it happened that Carl's mother was more than usually sad. In spite of all she could do, and she tried hard, she could not keep her tears from being seen; and though Carl again and again put his arms round her neck, and kissed her pale cheek, and begged her to take her breakfast, and then to walk with him into their little garden, to see how much work he had already done before she was up, he did not succeed in driving away her sorrow. At last, she said, "Carl, do you know any little errand boy who would go to Custrin to-day?"

To be sure, Carl very well knew of one who was not far off, who would go to the world's end, if there were such a place, without waiting to be twice asked.

"But you have never been alone, Carl; and it is nearly ten miles to Custrin. Are you not afraid of losing your way; and will not the walk make you very tired? Remember your legs are not very strong."

Carl was quite sure that he should not be tired; and that he very well knew the way; and without further argument, he ran into the little closet, which served for his bedroom, and quickly returned—not "booted and

spurred," but ready for the important mission. But before Carl is made acquainted with his errand, we must reveal the cause of his mother's grief, on this fine spring morning.

Before she left Berlin to live at Sprea, the widow Thorn placed all the little property she had left, in the hands of a merchant, who engaged to pay her a certain number of rix-dollars every three months, for the use of her money. Until lately she had received that income, with proper regularity, through another merchant who lived at Custrin. Thus, though the amount was very small, by good management she had always had enough, after paying the rent of her cottage, to last from one quarter-day to another. But now three weeks had passed, and her money had not reached her. Day after day she had sat at her window, watching for the appearance of the merchant's clerk who, mounted on a gray pony, had always punctually brought her the little packet of rix-dollars as often as the quarter-days came round. But now, though she had looked till her eyes ached, no gray pony had she seen trotting over the bridge which was the only road from the village to her cottage. Patiently had she waited, hoping that each day would end her uncertainty, until, at length, nothing but a single florin remained in her purse.

And this was not the worst of it. The quarter-day had arrived, and passed away, and, for the first time, the widow had been unable to pay the rent of her cottage. She had been obliged to ask for indulgence on account of

her disappointment ; and the agent of Count Stettin had spoken harshly to her, and had, but the day before we are speaking of, sent a cruel message to the poor tenant, that if the rent were not paid within a week, he would take her goods, and turn her out of the cottage : the agent was John Arnold, the miller.

This was a sore trouble to the poor widow ; but there was yet another cause for her sadness. She had never once asked the unmerciful miller to trust her for her weekly purchase of meal, and after what had passed about the rent, she dared not make such a request now ; and yet she had dreaded to part with the last florin until assured of a fresh supply, about which she had terrible misgivings. So the result was that one small brown loaf was not only the choicest, but the only food remaining for the support of herself and her little Carl. No wonder, then, that she was unable, on that morning, to eat the breakfast which he, unconscious of all the causes of her grief, so urgently pressed upon her.

And now Carl was ready, and waiting only for his errand. " Take this note, my son, to Mr. Rossi, the merchant, and ask for his reply. Perhaps he will give you money, if he does, be sure you do not lose it. If you receive from him only a letter, you must go to the goldsmith at the corner of the same street, where you once went with me to have my ring repaired. Give him this note (she put a second into Carl's hand) ; take care of it, there is a trinket inside, for which he will probably give you money. Shall you remember all this ? "

Yes : Carl would be sure to remember ; and, promising to be home again before sunset, at latest, he started on his journey, full of hope that his success,—and he was determined to succeed—would once more gladden his mother's heart.

But stop : “ Carl, Carl ; ”—it was his mother's voice calling after him as he had reached the garden gate. Carl returned. “ My poor boy. To think how thoughtless I could be ! I should never have forgiven myself. Why, Carl, what would you do for your dinner ? ”

“ Time enough for that mother, when I return. ”

“ What ! and walk twenty miles without food ! No, no ; you must get something nice when you are at Custrin ; or, may be, Mr. Rossi may ask you to dine with him. If not, you must not be without money. Here is a florin. ”

But Carl resolutely refused to take it. He saw, as she took it from her purse, that there was not another left behind. No, not he. It would have weighed him down to the ground, if he had put that last florin into his pocket.

Long and stoutly did Carl battle the point with his mother ; at length it was managed thus. Carl's mother was to keep the florin ; and, instead of trusting to Mr. Rossi's uncertain generosity, or of being under the necessity of breaking into the money he might receive at Custrin, Carl consented to take halt the small brown loaf, which he at once made up his mind would be delicious, eaten as he intended to eat it, seated on some pretty

bank by the road-side, close to a spring, that he might wash it down with the clear sparkling water. So, putting the brown bread into a little linen bag, Carl again set out on his journey. The poor widow watched him with watery eyes, until having tripped across the bridge, the great mill of John Arnold hid him from her sight; and then she began reckoning the hours and minutes until he should return. No wonder, for Carl was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and until now, amidst all the changes of her life, she had never, for a single day, been separated from that son.

“Harra, harra, hae, hae, harra; at him Wolf; after him good dog; harra, harra, that’s right, Wolf; make him run then, the little cowardly brat of a beggar:—Harra, harra!”

Poor Carl had flattered himself, after passing the great mill-gates, and reaching the far end of the village, that for once, he should escape the notice of his persecutor. But he was too soon undeceived. At the first shout of Michael Arnold, he turned round with a startled countenance; and with a feeling almost like agony, saw that not only Michael, but his dog Wolf were following after, about a hundred yards behind him. Carl’s first impulse was to run as fast as he could, to get away from the miller’s mischievous son. This was what Michael wanted; and though, probably, he meant nothing more than to give the poor boy a thorough frightening, the excitement of a regular chase soon commenced;

and Wolf, though not an evil-minded dog in general, appeared to enter into the sport with all the keenness, if not with quite the speed of a greyhound.

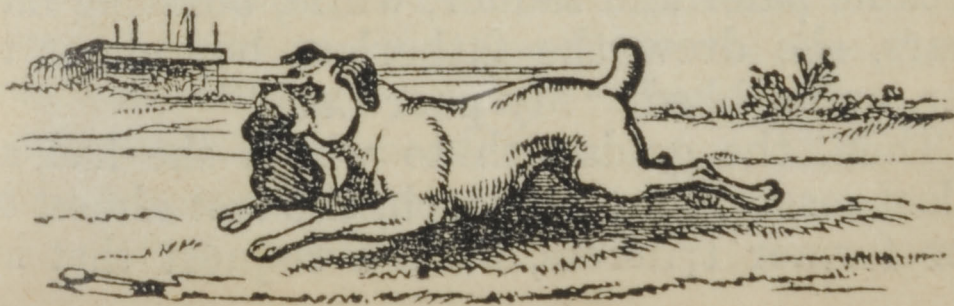
“Harra, Wolf, harra!” shouted Michael again, at the top of his voice, and laughing with savage glee to think how impotent would be all Carl's attempts to outrun his pursuers. Alas! poor Carl soon perceived that he was at the mercy of his enemies; and panting with terror and fatigue, he threw himself on the ground despairingly, just as Wolf was at his heels. Had he planned such a mode of escape, it could not have succeeded better; for perceiving the chase to be ended, Wolf's natural forbearance returned to him; and instead of worrying poor Carl, he contented himself with sniffing around him, as he lay on the ground, only growling when the terrified boy attempted to move.

Wolf had not sniffed long, before he discovered that the little bag which Carl had still in his hand contained something very desirable for him, dog as he was, to take possession of. Taking the bag, therefore, between his teeth, with one strong pull he disengaged it from Carl's hold, and without waiting for his master—who, now that the chase was ended, was walking leisurely towards them, and laughing with all his might—the sagacious dog darted off with his prize; and, before Carl had once thought of such a sudden deliverance, was almost half-way towards his home.

“Harra, harra, Wolf, bring it to me, you

rascal!" shouted Wolf's master. But this time, it better suited Wolf's interest to take no notice of the call, except to quicken his pace. This so enraged Michael, that without bestowing another thought upon the still prostrate Carl, he pursued the dog, uttering loud threats of vengeance, if he did not stop and give up what he had stolen. Before he succeeded in this, however, he was in the mill-yard, when puffing and panting with this second chase, he at length rescued the bag. "Psha," he exclaimed, "only a bit of brown bread. If I had known what it was, I would not have put myself to all this trouble. Good dog; catch it Wolf," added he, as he disdainfully tossed the half-loaf into the dog's open jaws, "Carl Thorn may thank his stars at being let off so cheaply."

Whether or not Carl thanked his stars, he was happy to find he had sustained no further damage than the loss of his dinner, and marvelling what had become of his tormentors, he slowly rose from the ground, and wiping away a tear or two, which in spite of himself he had not been able to suppress, he recommenced his journey, thus for the second time interrupted. "Never mind," said he to himself, "it is only to wait a little longer. He might have left me the bag, though!"



CHAPTER III.

MORE ABOUT CARL AND HIS MOTHER.

It is a saying worth remembering by every boy and girl; ay, and by every man and woman too, that, "None can command success, but all may deserve it." Let it be known also, that there is more real satisfaction in *deserving* success than in *obtaining it without desert*.

Our friend Carl's mission to Custrin was, after all, unsuccessful. Wearied in body, and faint for want of food, for Mr. Rossi did not invite him to dinner, he returned to his mother's cottage.

First, there was a letter from Mr. Rossi. The tidings it contained were very distressing. The merchant of Berlin, to whom Madame Thorn had intrusted all her property, had fled from the country, leaving all his creditors without any hope of ever receiving a single dollar of all that he owed them. There was not a line of hope or comfort in Mr. Rossi's short note; and no wonder that the poor widow's pale and sorrow-worn countenance became paler and sadder, while, bursting into tears, she drew the fatherless boy closer to her, and sobbed, "My poor Carl!"

Then, the goldsmith to whom she had, as a last resort, sent a brooch, the last almost of her former trinkets, with a request that he

would purchase it at his own price, had taken advantage, as she thought, of her pressing necessity, and sent five florins as the utmost he could afford to give.

“Five florins !” exclaimed the poor widow, “why, ten years ago it cost me ten times five florins !”

There was, however, no help for it. Five florins were better than nothing ; at least they supplied her present necessities, and enabled her to procure food for herself and Carl, until she could decide what course to take.

In a few days it was known that the widow Thorn and her son were about to leave Sprea. A broker, or kind of dealer in all sorts of odds and ends, had been sent for from Custrin, and had purchased the whole of the widow's goods, even to the dear delightful books ; and with the money she received, the rent had been paid, leaving a pretty well-filled purse, all things considered, though with but a terribly small sum, when the poor lady looked at it as all in the world that was left to her, except her son.

Even the miller was moved to a sort of remorse, when he found that the widow was really going. He began to consider what offence she had ever given him, and to think that perhaps his next neighbours at the cottage might, after all, be more objectionable. Such reflections were, however, too late for any real good, and he soon dismissed them, after charging Michael to desist from any further annoyance to Carl, and punishing him rather severely

for the affair of the brown bread, which, somehow or other, had come to his ears. Not that Carl had complained; he would have borne far greater injury without complaint. If not strong to resist, he was powerful to endure.

All places now seemed much alike to poor Carl and his mother; but as the hare, when hunted from place to place, at length returns to the retreat from which it was first driven, so the widow determined to seek once more a hiding-place, if not a resting-place, in Berlin. It was better at least to return thither, to see what chance there might be of recovering her lost property, and, if that failed, of searching for some humble employment for herself and her boy. It might be that she entertained a faint hope of interesting some of her former acquaintance in his favour: but this hope, if for a moment encouraged, soon failed when she remembered how complete the separation had for many years been between herself and them.

But whatever were the widow's hopes or fears, a week had scarcely passed away from the time of Carl's fruitless journey to Custrin, before, seated in a cheap conveyance, they were slowly travelling towards Berlin.

The first anxious inquiries of the widow proved the completeness of her ruin. Not a single florin, she was positively assured, could ever be recovered of the property of which the faithless merchant had deprived her. Her heart almost failed her, as, on the second day after her arrival in Berlin, she proceeded with

Carl to the part of the city where she was known in prosperity, in search of some friend or old acquaintance, who would assist her to any employment, by which her son and herself might be secured from actual want. Willingly would she have avoided this trial, but there seemed to be no other resource. Her little stock of money was fast diminishing, although she had taken lodgings in a miserable house, in the cheapest and most obscure part of the city.

Joy of joys! who should they meet but Agatha—dear nurse Agatha! It was Agatha who was the first to remember her old mistress, and to speak. It was Agatha who soon found how matters stood with that mistress and her “beautiful darling Carl.” And you may be sure it was Agatha who said, “You must go with me, and make my house your home. To think that such a lady—so kind and loving as you always were, and such a lady as you are now, although you say you are so poor,—should be wandering this weary city in search of a home, while Agatha has such a happy one!”

“Are you not in service, then, Agatha?”

Oh, no; Agatha had left service a year ago and more, and was married to the best husband in Berlin—so kind, so sober, so industrious, that it was a pleasure to know him, much more to be his wife.

“Where do you live, Agatha? we will come and see you; but I should not think of being a burden to you.”

But Agatha was quite resolved, that she

would not lose sight of her dear mistress and Carl. She was going straight home then. It was but a short half-mile from where they were standing; and sorrow and shame would be her portion, if she should lose sight of her old friends, if she might be bold enough to call them so. "And how fortunate that I should have taken that little parcel myself for my husband, who is so full of work that he does not know which way to turn: and what a good thing I came down this street instead of going up the other!" And how rejoiced she was, that she had nothing more to do but to put her dear mistress in the way to her home, and to walk behind her with Carl, if she might take his hand, just as she used to do, years and years ago.

So at length the lady consented; what else could she do! and after walking by the side of Agatha, the short half-mile,—which turned out to be a long one, for ardent people are bad calculators,—Carl and his mother found themselves in a neat house in the outskirts of Berlin, eating a better meal than they had tasted for months, which Agatha, resplendent with smiles and tears, to say nothing of sobs and laughter, insisted upon setting before them.

In less time than it takes to tell, Agatha's husband had found out how matters stood, and, without saying a word more than was necessary, started off, just as he was, to the lady's wretched lodging, and brought away the single trunk, which contained the clothes of herself and Carl. So before night, it was a

thing understood by all parties, and finally settled, that Carl and his mother were to live at free quarters in Agatha's house, until something more promising turned up for them.

It is a bold thing to take a newly-married woman's word for the good qualities of her husband; but really Agatha had kept *almost* within bounds in talking of her's. Albert, or Fritz, or Albert Fritz, or Fritz Albert,—which of these was the right way of calling him Carl never quite understood, for he answered to them all, and any way—but one or all, he was Agatha's husband, and Agatha's husband was the very perfection of a model of a sober, industrious mechanic, and a kind, sympathizing friend. Just the sort of husband, in Carl's opinion, that his dear old nurse deserved.

By trade, Albert was a cabinet-maker and joiner, and particularly clever in the little knick-knackereries of his business, such as in the making of work-boxes and dressing-cases, and small articles of a similar nature. He worked partly on his own account; but the excellence of his workmanship was so well known, that he could always dispose of his manufactures at two or three of the largest furniture-shops in Berlin. At first, no doubt, it was some sacrifice to him, however freely he had encountered it, to take Carl and his mother into his house without any recompense, especially as Agatha insisted they should occupy her best apartment, and be waited upon by her as in days gone by. But after a short time, it seemed as though nothing better could have happened for all parties,

than the casual meeting of Agatha and her mistress, for Carl would insist upon going on errands for his kind friend, carrying home his work, and doing a hundred little odd jobs, which saved Albert's time, which to him was as good as money. And the grateful widow was equally desirous and able to assist, with her taste and genius, in forming fresh designs for her protector, as well as in finishing-off some parts of his work, which needed a female's skill and tact, for which before, he had been compelled to pay rather dearly. In process of time, too, Carl advanced to higher employment in the workshop than that of running on errands. His industry, knowledge, and tractability were now producing their natural good fruits; and before many months were over, he earned his own and his mother's expenses, over and over again.

Some English boys in Carl's circumstances, would, we fear, think themselves degraded by working as mechanics. Perhaps they would say something like this,—“My father was a gentleman, and I will starve rather than stoop to such a low employment.” But, happily for him, Carl's mother had had the good sense to teach him, from his very childhood, that nothing but what is dishonourable, is mean and disgraceful. She had taken pains, too, to impress upon his mind that he had little in life to depend upon but his own industry. It had often been a source of anxiety to her, what she should do with her son when his boyhood had passed; and instead of lamenting the loss of her little

property, which had driven her from her quiet home at Sprea, she soon came to look upon it as the best thing that could have happened.

It is true, Carl would have preferred some kind of work to have given more employment to his active mind: but he took care not to lose what knowledge he had gained. He had still many long evenings alone with his mother, and as their circumstances became gradually more easy, Carl had soon a store of books again at his command.

But Agatha—was it not very selfish of her, and of Albert too, after offering a home to the poor widow lady and her son, to allow them to work at such a trade? Not at all: even if they could have prevented it, which they could not; for the only terms on which Carl and his mother would consent to remain with their kind old servant, were that they should be permitted to work. As soon, therefore, as Carl became really useful, and was entitled to receive money, he insisted upon paying, not only the present and future expenses of his mother and himself, but as far as money could do so, for past kindness. This, however, was a work of time, and we cannot afford room to trace the progress of the industrious lad step by step, for we have much more yet to write about other persons.



CHAPTER IV.

A SCENE IN A PALACE.

FREDERICK, the King of Prussia, was hasty and positive ; but not intentionally unjust. Before he became king, he had been harshly treated by his father, who had very little regard for any person besides himself. So unkindly had the young prince been used, that once he determined to leave his father's kingdom, and take refuge in England ; but this design was discovered, and an unfortunate officer who was trusted with the secret, was put to death for not having revealed it. After this, Prince Frederick had been compelled to marry a lady for whom he had no affection ; and, in every other way, he was thwarted by his severe and arbitrary father.

In two respects, this early training had been of some use to Frederick, though the same effects might have been produced by gentler methods. For one thing, it had driven him to seek pleasure in reading and study, and the practice of several useful arts. For another, it had taught him to dislike tyranny, and prepared him to become a much milder and more amiable monarch than his father had been.

As soon as he became king of Prussia, which was in 1740, he distinguished himself

by many acts of generosity, which procured for him the affection of his subjects. We will mention one of these, though it has nothing to do with our story, except as it will give our readers a better opinion of King Frederick, than had, at one time, our friend Carl Thorn.

The great pride of the old king had been to have a large army; and it was his custom, when he saw a boy whose appearance he liked, to order an account to be taken of him, and a badge to be put round his neck, by which he was marked for the king's service, while the poor boy's parents were forbidden to train him for any other business than that of a soldier. Soon after Frederick became king, as he was passing from Berlin to Potsdam, a large number of these boys met him, surrounding his coach, and crying out, "Merciful King, deliver us from our slavery!" This pitiful prayer touched the young king's compassion, and he directly ordered the hateful badges to be taken off, and set the poor boys free.

One great fault, however, in Frederick was, that he was very ambitious, and, in the early part of his reign, made unjust wars upon his neighbours. But in the later years of his life, he was a mild and benevolent sovereign, devoting himself to the real welfare of his people.

Carl Thorn, the father of *our* Carl, was a principal secretary in King Frederick's war-office, during part of his reign; and, as the reader has been told, was hastily dismissed on some suspicion of having been unfaithful to the monarch. Carl had always been quite

sure of his father's innocence ; and Carl was right.

It happened one day, about the time that Carl and his mother were wandering, as they thought, forlorn and friendless, in the streets of Berlin, before they met with Agatha, that the king had made a discovery which proved to him how entirely he had been mistaken in his suspicions. His first emotion was sorrow for having so hastily dismissed a faithful and useful servant ; and his next proceeding was to inquire where the injured man could then be found. But Frederick discovered—that every body in the world finds—that it is easier to commit an unjust action than to repair it. He could gain no certain tidings of the missing secretary, and after a few more fruitless exertions, the matter passed from his mind.

About six years after this, the affair was brought afresh into the king's recollection by a singular circumstance. A curious dressing-case had been purchased for him ; and on opening a small drawer which it contained, Frederick found a strip of paper, on which were written a few sentences in Latin, signed with the name, " Carl Thorn."

At first, the king thought that the paper was put there by some one with a design to reproach him for his past injustice ; but after a little consideration, the idea was dismissed. The dressing-case had come directly from the shop in which it was bought. Those who sold it had no knowledge of the purchaser ; and it

had passed through the hands of no one but his own valet. Besides, the Latin sentences had no connexion with Carl Thorn; and the paper itself seemed like a Latin exercise, rather than any thing else.

There was, however, something in the handwriting which put Frederick in mind of his poor secretary; so that he almost believed it to have been written by him. At all events, without further delay, the king determined not to rest until he discovered the writer.

Albert Fritz and Carl were busily engaged in their workshop, when a carriage stopped at the door. From the carriage stepped out a well-dressed stranger. In another moment, the stranger was standing in the workshop.

“There is here a workman named Carl Thorn, is there not?”

Carl answered to the inquiry.

“You will have the kindness,” the stranger continued, “to accompany me.”

The natural response of the young man was, “Whither?”

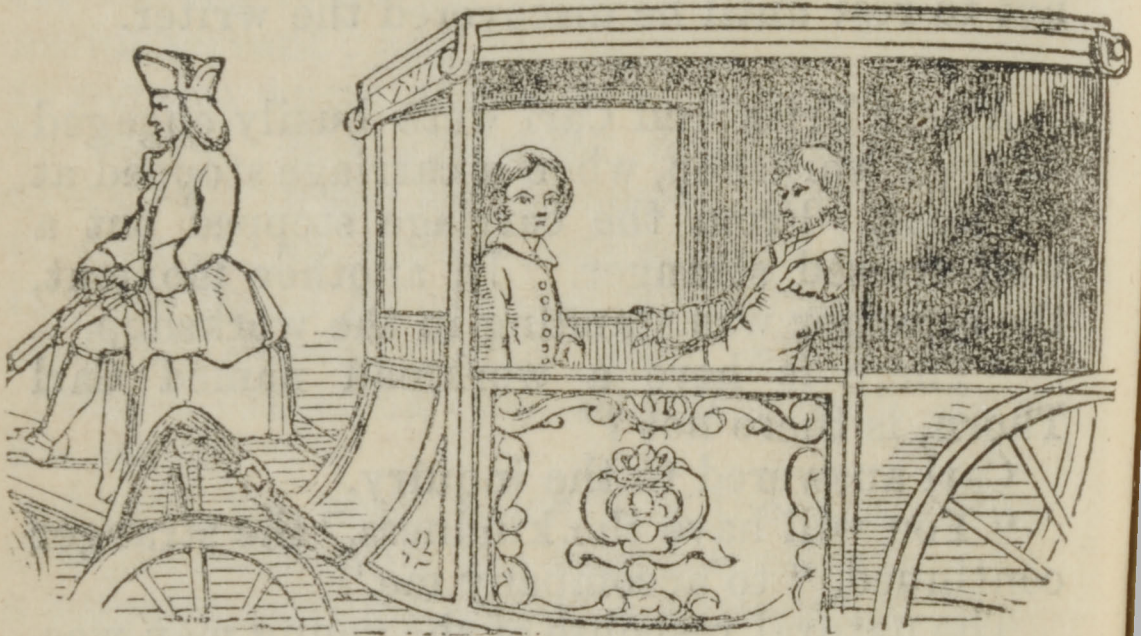
“It is of little consequence,” replied the gentleman, “the business on which you are required will not probably take long to transact; but it is necessary for you to go with me without delay.”

Carl hesitated; but the tone of the stranger though polite, was firm, and as the young workman had no reason to suppose any mischief could be intended against him; he after a moment's thought, merely requested the messenger to wait while he changed his gar-

ments; but this the stranger declared to be unnecessary.

“At least,” said Carl, “you will allow me to wash my hands?”

“Certainly,” replied the positive gentleman.—In less than ten minutes, the carriage was driven rapidly up the street, leaving Fritz more than a little amazed at being thus mysteriously left alone in his workshop.



Carl's surprise at finding himself so suddenly transferred from a work-bench to a carriage, was not so great as to prevent a smile at the contrast presented between his coarse and not over-clean linen jacket, and the costly cushions on which he was seated. But the companion of his ride appeared not to notice this. Indeed, having succeeded in his object, this strange gentleman seemed to consider his part of the business done; and, throwing him-

self back in the carriage, was soon lost either in profound meditation or deep slumber.

On—on—whirled the carriage. Nearly an hour had passed, during which time Carl had lost sight of that part of the city with which he was familiar; and had entered a quarter which was to him quite unknown. Suddenly, leaving the main streets, the carriage turned down an obscure lane, passed through one or two intricate passages, entered a spacious court-yard, and then stopped. At the same moment, the stranger awoke, or appeared to wake out of his sleep, and springing from the carriage, requested Carl to follow him. Entering what appeared to be the inferior offices of a large house, they passed onwards, uninterrupted in their progress by any of the persons they encountered, until Carl's conductor tapped at a door, which was immediately opened to them by a young man, who, bowing respectfully, led them through a large and well-furnished apartment to a smaller room, into which, after a few moments' delay, Carl was directed to enter alone.

Standing by a table in that room, he saw a gentleman in a plain military dress, evidently expecting the visit, for without further introduction, after a sharp, quick glance at the young workman, he asked,—

“Are you Carl Thorn?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And the writer of this paper?” producing a slip of manuscript, which Carl immediately recognised as a part of a Latin exercise which two or three weeks before had been

his evening study. He at once acknowledged this.

"Are you aware how it came into my possession?" inquired the gentleman.

"Certainly not;" was the reply. "And yet," he continued, "perhaps I can account for it. I see on it some figures which I remember as part of a calculation I made respecting the dimensions of a dressing-case on which I was employed. The paper must accidentally have been left in that case."

"True," remarked the questioner, "it was in a dressing-case that paper was found."

Carl began to apologise for his carelessness, though in his heart he thought it a paltry affair to have occasioned such a stir. The gentleman seemed to guess what was passing in his mind.

"Well, well," said he, "I only wished to know you as the writer. It matters not. But, pray, have you been long engaged in making this sort of thing?" pointing to the dressing-case, which, for the first time, Carl observed on the table.

"Some years, sir."

"Um! Your father then, is a mechanic, perhaps?"

"No, sir," replied Carl.

"What then?" asked the gentleman, rather sharply.

"I have no father, sir; he died when I was a child."

The stranger made no direct reply, but took a huge pinch of snuff, which, however, made no impression on his nerves.

“What then was your father?”

Carl hesitated for a moment, and looked keenly at the inquisitive personage. Their eyes met, and there was something in the glance of the gentleman, that encouraged Carl to answer,—

“My father was one of his Majesty’s secretaries, sir; but this was a great many years ago.”

Another tremendous pinch of snuff.

“Well, young man, you can write, and you dabble in Latin, I see. What else do you know?”

Carl answered modestly, but with becoming spirit, that he was indebted to his mother’s instructions for many things which otherwise he could never have learned.

“But why make a mechanic of you? Your father, it seems, was a gentleman; you should have”——

“Pardon me, sir,” returned Carl, “we had no resources. My mother’s property, little as it was, was all lost six years ago; and but for the kindness of an old domestic, we should now be entirely destitute.”

The stranger must have been very fond of snuff, for at this part of the conversation, he took another vast pinch.

“Your father, you say, was the king’s secretary. Well?”

“Sir, I do not understand you,” replied Carl.

“How did he lose his post?”

“He was dismissed, sir.”

“Young man, the king does not dismiss his

servants without cause. Your father must have misbehaved himself."

"Sir," replied Carl, "I have answered all your questions without reserve; but permit me to say, my father's honour is dear to me. You have no right to put me to the pain of hearing it lightly spoken of."

"You think, then,—am I so to understand you?—that your father did not deserve the treatment he met with?"

"I am sure," was Carl's answer, "that the king was greatly mistaken."

"Um!—a delicate way of saying that the king committed a great piece of injustice. Carl Thorn," here the stranger placed himself directly opposite the young man, and fixed another of his penetrating looks upon him, "do you know me?"

"No, sir," Carl calmly replied.

"Very well," said the mysterious stranger, "I thank you for this interview, and I trust we shall one day, and soon, be better acquainted." He rang a bell. "You will now retire with my servant; shortly you may expect to hear from me."

The last sound Carl heard, as he left the room, was the noise made by his new acquaintance, in taking another of his astonishing pinches of snuff.

CHAPTER V.

AFFAIRS OF IMPORTANCE IN THE VILLAGE.

WE have now to request our readers to suppose twenty years to have passed away, since the afflicted widow Thorn and her son were driven from their cottage at Sprea.

Twenty years make great alterations every where. Even the little Prussian village had not escaped the touch of time.

For one thing, it had obtained a new owner. The old Count Stettin had been some time dead, and his successor had made great alterations in the no longer deserted chateau. Very extensive improvements had been made in the building, and many were still going on in the grounds by which it was surrounded.

The old mill stood where it did, and its large water-wheel still unceasingly rolled its accustomed round, but *it* also had a new master. This was Michael Arnold, now a sturdy, laughter-loving, but industrious man, of two or three-and-thirty years of age. Almost as a matter of course, he was married, and the mill-yard resounded all day long with the shouts, and often with the loud contentions of numerous and not remarkably docile children. There was a "Wolf," too, to guard the miller's premises; but our former acquaintance of that name had long passed out of mind.

John Arnold was yet living ; and where, but in the white cottage over the water ?— which looked much as it did of yore, only far less neat, and therefore less pleasing. John himself was sadly altered. He looked much older than his years would have given warrant for, and a settled gloom rested on him. He had, six years before, parted with the lease of the mill to his son, reserving to himself the right of living rent-free in the old house. But this arrangement had not been found to answer at all ; so, though with much regret, he had abandoned the home of his younger days. The whole village beside was altered. Many of the villagers were dead, others had migrated, a new race had sprung up, cottages had been pulled down, others had been built by the new proprietor. Altogether, it did not appear the same Sprea as of old.

We shall now gain a little relief from the toil of continuing this story in our own words, by giving

An extract from a newspaper of the year 1780.

“ One Michael Arnold,” says this authority, “ held the lease of a mill belonging to the estate of Count S——, near the town of Custrin. This mill, at the time when Mr. Arnold obtained possession of the lease, was plentifully supplied with water, which empties itself into the river Wartha. During six years, Mr. Arnold had made various improvements in the said mill, and, by means of his labour and industry, had been enabled to pay his rent regularly, and to acquire a sufficiency for the maintenance of his family. At the end of that period, about four years ago, the proprietor of the mill resolved to enlarge a fish-pond

near his seat, and caused a canal to be cut from the said rivulet, at a small distance above the mill, to supply his fish-pond with water. By this means the current of the stream was lessened, and the quantity of water so much diminished, that the mill could no longer do the usual work.

“The miller had foreseen the event, and from the beginning had remonstrated against the cutting of the canal. But his remonstrances, as well as his solicitations for cancelling the lease, proved in vain; and he was at last forced to seek redress in a court of justice at Custrin. But his lord, being a man of fortune and consequence in that province, soon found means to frustrate his endeavours. He continued to enlarge his fish-pond, so that the miller, instead of obtaining redress, found the water daily decreasing to such a degree, that at last he could only work during two or three weeks in spring, and about as many in the latter part of the year.

“Under these circumstances, the miller could no longer procure his livelihood, and pay his rent, and consequently, became indebted to his lord for a considerable sum. The latter, in order to obtain his rent, entered a suit against him in the same court of law at Custrin, which had before refused relief to the miller, and soon obtained a sentence against the miller’s effects; which sentence being approved and ratified in the high court of appeal at Berlin, was put into execution. Michael Arnold’s lease, utensils, goods, and chattels, were seized and sold, in order to pay the arrears of rent, and the expenses of a most unjust lawsuit. Thus poor Arnold and his family were reduced from comfort to want and wretchedness.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE STORY COMES TO AN END.

WE must turn again to Berlin. This time we shall enter a large mansion in one of the principal streets of the city. It is a winter's evening, and in a well-lighted and beautifully warm apartment are two of our old friends, and some new ones.

First, there is an elderly lady seated on a comfortable couch, employed in some kind of needlework, and looking very happy as she keeps up an animated conversation with one much younger than herself, whom we may suppose is the mother of the infant she nurses in her arms, as well as of two other children in the room. The young lady we have never met before ; but it needs not a second glance to tell us, that the elderly one is the widow, but certainly no longer the *poor* widow, Thorn.

Very near them, but at a separate table, is a gentleman, perhaps about thirty-five years of age, or *a few thoughts older*. He has, however, no very sad thoughts now to deepen his wrinkles, if we may judge so from the hearty manner in which he is amusing the two boys, who, one on his knee, and the other standing close by, are listening to a story he is telling them, in a comical sort of way, about a dog who ran away with a poor boy's dinner ; and

how the poor boy had nothing to eat till he got home again.

It must surely be our friend Carl; for who else could know any thing about it?

Yes, indeed, it is Carl—rich Carl Thorn,—the great advocate, and one of King Frederick's most trusted advisers. We may take for granted that the young lady is his wife, and that he is the happy father of three happy children.

Of course this is a very agreeable part of our story; and, perhaps some of our readers guessed that something like this would come to pass when they last took leave of poor Carl, as *he* took leave of the snuff-taking gentleman, whom they knew to be the King of Prussia, though he did not. But it must be told, that Carl's own industry and perseverance had done quite as much for him as the King's favour:—ay, and more; for if Frederick had not formed a good opinion of the poor lad in the working-jacket, he would not have sent him soon afterwards to the University of Berlin; and if Carl had not worked hard, very hard, while there, he would not have gained much success in his profession. And if Carl's principles had not been as good as his industry was great, he would never have risen as he had done in the esteem of his royal patron. Carl Thorn had indeed gained the palm; but not without labour.

“Another story, papa;” said the eldest boy, when Mr. Thorn had quite finished the history of the poor boy, who was robbed of his dinner.

But before he could think of this other story, the door opened, and in stepped, who but Agatha !

To be sure all stories were laid aside and forgotten, when " good nurse Agatha, kind nurse Agatha," made her appearance. Who was the best pleased of all the group, it would be hard to tell.

Agatha seemed somehow to have been expected by the ladies, and especially by Mr. Thorn ; and as soon as the youngsters could be dismissed, a serious conversation took place. It referred to some poor man who had suffered great injustice, and whose case Mr. Thorn had taken up without expectation of reward, except the approval of a good conscience. That poor man was Michael Arnold.

It was quite accidentally that the busy lawyer had heard of Michael's misfortunes, and he had at first made inquiries respecting the nature of them with a view to giving him some relief in money. But when made acquainted with all the circumstances of his case, he determined on a more efficient mode of *being revenged* on the enemy of his boyhood. For this purpose he had, without making himself known, managed to have Michael enticed to Berlin, with a promise that the whole matter should be laid before the king, who was really desirous of doing justice to all. When he arrived in Berlin, Mr. Thorn contrived that a lodging should be provided for him at his old friend Agatha's house, and that she herself should be the bearer of all com-

munications between the advocate and his poor client.

“And you are sure, Agatha, you have not mentioned my name to the poor miller?”

“No, sir, and I am sure he does not at all guess who it is has come forward as his friend. Indeed, if he heard your name, I do not think he would be any the wiser. He does not seem to have much recollection of anything but what relates to his mill.”

“At any rate,” remarked the younger lady, “he could scarcely recognise the little Carl Thorn of Sprea, in the great councillor Thorn of Berlin.”

“Perhaps not; but we will not try him. It would only embitter his present sufferings to be put in mind of the unprovoked cruelty of his boyhood. To have my full revenge upon him, he must at present know me only as his advocate. Well Agatha, you may tell him that I have carefully looked over all his papers, and am convinced that the right is on his side. He has powerful enemies though; but with the king’s help, we shall gain the day. To-morrow I shall lay the narrative I have drawn up from the papers before his Majesty.”

We shall now give another of our old newspaper readings:—

“His Majesty, struck with the simplicity of the narrative, and the injustice that had apparently been committed, resolved to inquire minutely into the affair, and if the miller’s assertions were founded in truth, to punish, in an exemplary manner, the authors and promoters of such an unjust sentence.

“The king accordingly made inquiries, and the infor-

mations he received, corroborated the miller's narrative. His Majesty afterwards ordered the registers of his high court of appeals, as also all the memorials and pleadings of the lawsuit to be laid before him, which he revised, *with the assistance of an eminent lawyer*. And that nothing might be wanting, his Majesty sent a person of confidence to Custrin, with orders to survey the said mill, the rivulet, and the new canal, and also to inquire into the miller's character, his former situation in life, the true cause of his failure, and all other circumstances attending this affair. And after being well convinced that the sentence against Michael Arnold, was an act of the most singular oppression, the King immediately formed his resolution.

"The next day, the king ordered his high chancellor and the three counsellors who had signed the sentence against Michael Arnold, into his cabinet; and, on their arrival, put the following questions to them.

"*The King*.—'When a lord takes from a peasant who rents a piece of ground under him, his wagon, horse, plough, and other utensils, by which he earns his living, and is thereby prevented from paying his rent, can a sentence be in justice pronounced upon that peasant?'

"They all answered, 'No, it could not.'

"*The King*.—'Can a like sentence be pronounced upon a miller for nonpayment of rent for a mill, after the water, which used to turn his mill, is wilfully taken from him by the proprietor of the mill?'

"They also answered in the negative.

"'Then,' said the king, 'you have yourselves acknowledged the injustice you have committed. Here is the case:—A nobleman, in order to enlarge his fish-pond, has caused a canal to be cut, to receive more water from a rivulet which used to turn a mill. By this means the miller lost his water, and could not work his mill. Notwithstanding which, it is expected that he shall pay his rent as before, when the mill was plentifully supplied with water: but as this was out of his power, the court at Custrin decreed that the miller's effects should be sold to pay the arrears of rent. This sentence was sent to the high court of appeals, and was confirmed and signed by you. Since when it has been executed.'

"Here the king ordered the sentence, with their signa-

tures to be laid before them, and afterwards commanded his private secretary to read the resolution which he himself had prepared and signed, and which is as follows:—

“ ‘ The sentence decreed against the miller Arnold, being an act of the most singular injustice, and entirely opposed to the paternal intentions of his Majesty, whose desire is that impartial justice be speedily administered to all his subjects, whether rich or poor, without regard to rank or person; his Majesty, in order to prevent similar iniquities for the future, is resolved to punish, in an exemplary manner, the authors of that unjust sentence, and to establish an example for the future conduct of judges and magistrates in his dominions. For they are all to consider that the meanest peasant, nay, even the beggar, is a man as well as the king, and consequently equally entitled to impartial justice, especially, as in the presence of justice, all are equal, whether it be a prince who brings a complaint against a peasant, or a peasant who prefers one against a prince. This ought to be a rule for the conduct of judges; and if the courts of law in his dominions should ever deviate from this principle, they may depend upon being severely punished: for unjust judges are more dangerous than a band of robbers; they are the worst of ill-doers, and deserve double shame.

“ After the reading of the above, the king told the chancellor that he had no further occasion for his services, and ordered them all to withdraw. He also sent immediate orders to Custrin, for the president and judges who had decreed the unjust sentence in the first instance to be arrested, and proceeded against according to law.

“ His Majesty, also, in consideration of the miller's losses and sufferings, presented him with the sum of 1500 rix-dollars. He also ordered that a sum, equal to that produced by the sale of the miller's effects, should be stopped, and paid to him, from the salaries due to the judges who had any share in that unjust sentence. He, moreover, condemned the Proprietor of the mill to pay back to the miller all the rent he had received from the time he opened the canal.”

“ Well, Thorn,” said the king, one day soon afterwards, to the successful advocate, “ we

have made a man of your miller again ; and certainly he had been badly used, and deserved justice from us ; but tell me what made you take such an interest in his affairs ? I tell you frankly, that you have made yourself some enemies by bringing the matter before me. I suppose the man was one of your early friends, like—what is his name ?—Fritz, the joiner, for whom you have done so much ?—is that it ?”

“No, sire,” answered Carl, “it is not. When a poor helpless boy, I suffered much from the persecutions of Michael Arnold. He was my bitter foe.”

“Eh, what !” exclaimed Frederick.

“My bitter enemy, may it please your Majesty. Until this affair happened, I have had no opportunity of retaliating ; but now, I have taken my *full revenge*.”

Frederick the Great, for by that title is the old king known in history, made no reply ; but he took a mighty pinch of snuff.

It was some years before Michael Arnold knew certainly who had been his benefactor. But shortly after the death of the king, which happened in 1786, Carl Thorn, foreseeing that changes would take place in the government which he could not approve, and which might involve him in ruin, determined to retire from public life. Just at that time, the estate of Count Stettin at Sprea, was announced for

sale ; and of Sprea, notwithstanding his early trials, Carl had always had a pleasing remembrance. It was there that he had enjoyed the beauties of nature ; and there, too, he had learned those lessons from his mother's lips, which had tended so much to his happiness and prosperity in life.

Carl had not laid by a princely fortune, but he had saved property enough to purchase that portion of the Stettin estate, on which were the old mill and the little cottage, which was at the time without a tenant, for old John Arnold had been dead some months. On taking possession of this property, Carl had not the heart to pull down the dear old abode of his childhood ; but without disturbing *that*, he made such enlargements as were necessary for his family, not forgetting to add to the little garden a large piece of ground adjoining.

It was a happy day for Carl when all was completed, and he brought his wife and children to their new home. His mother was still among them ; and if her eyes filled with tears as she stepped from the carriage and entered the house, leaning upon the arm of her son, they were tears of gratitude and happiness—not of grief.

Agatha was there too. Her presence was considered quite indispensable to help in arranging the furniture, which, by the way, all came from Albert's manufactory, and in superintending every thing, till the family were quietly settled down. And she did not leave Sprea without making a decided promise to

pay at least one long visit every year to her old friends.

Of course, Agatha could not be at Sprea, without paying a visit to an old lodger of her's,—one Michael Arnold : and then, somehow or other, the miller learned for the first time that his new landlord was no other than the kind lawyer who had saved him from ruin, and that that lawyer was the same with the little persecuted Carl Thorn.

What his feelings were on making this discovery, must be left to the fancy of our readers ; but we have to tell, that thenceforth Carl Thorn and Michael Arnold were the best neighbours rivulet ever parted ; and that, to the end of his life, Michael had one favourite saying, which probably he picked out of some old book—we have seen it somewhere ourselves,—“BE NOT OVERCOME OF EVIL; BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.”



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